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CLEVELAND, OHIO 44106 CABLE ADDRESS: MUSART CLEVELAND
SHERMAN E. LEE, DIRECTOR TELEPHONE: 421-7340

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7 ARTISTS: CONTEMPORARY
DRAWINGS EXHIBITION ON
DISPLAY AT MUSEUM

7 Artists: Contemporary Drawings, an exhibition of drawings by current artists is on view at The Cleveland Museum of Art through April 30.

The seven artists in the exhibition--Ed. Baynard, Joe Nicastri, Mel Pekarsky, Susan Rothenberg, Jeanette Pasin Sloan, Michael Vessa, and Susan Wilmarth--were chosen for their contributions to making contemporary drawing a medium of change and exploration. Like other forms of the visual arts, drawing has evolved into an extensive exploration of content, medium, and technique. Color is giving new life to contemporary drawings, while materials such as masking tape and spackling compound are changing its technical execution.

Just as the use of new and unusual materials and a reliance on color indicate a departure from the long standing view of drawing as a medium, so too does the size of many contemporary drawings. Once thought of as an intimate, small-scale medium, drawings are now sometimes more easily measured in feet than inches.

Baynard's (born 1940) latest drawings are a hybrid of formalist arrangement, abstraction, and the use of realist technical skill. In an earlier series depicting bowls the drawings can be read contradictorily, either as flat shapes of variegated color or as glazed ceramic bowls with surface reflections. His works in the exhibition show an important transition in Baynard's career, as he moved from recognizable shapes to totally abstract forms. His drawings are records of response

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to given situations and settings. He says, "They are about quiet," indicating control without constraint and inviting solitary contemplation.

Nicastri (born 1945) is the one artist in the exhibition for whom drawing is the main medium of expression. His concept of drawing embraces the use of a variety of materials, and space is a major concern. Using his delicate style to draw flowers or the single human figure he has in the show, he evokes a sense of things past and contemplation of life.

Pekarsky (born 1934) has chosen to draw and paint landscapes as a powerful imagery and iconography readily understood by many people. Isolation and solitude are the basic content of his drawings. He first conceives what he wants to depict and then searches for the setting which best expresses that conception. Once there, he waits for the light he finds most evocative and takes photographs from which he executes his drawings.

Looking at Rothenberg's (born 1945) drawings, it is easy to recall the cave paintings of Lascaux. The horses she draws seem primitive and simple, yet extremely forceful. Imagery which at first seems easily understood is upon longer look seen to be shaded by subtle nuances that create a sophisticated primitivism speaking to modern man.

Simple shapes in the form of everyday objects and reflective surfaces intrigue Sloan (born 1946). She arranges and rearranges these objects until she finds a pleasing composition which she translates into monumental still lifes combining large shapes and reflections. She both paints and draws, using colored pencils, often over an acrylic wash.

Vessa (born 1948) uses drawings largely as parts of other projects, such as room constructions, but he has a lyrical drawing style that helps make his drawings self-contained statements. He carries on the minimalist tradition of working with

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sculptural form and its relation to space. In fact he was once both a painter and a sculptor, who several years ago turned away from those media and now devotes much of his time to installations forming a total environment.

Wilmarth (born 1942) like Vessa uses drawings as parts of larger projects. Her water colors are small and intimate and, although they function as studies for her huge oil paintings, are finished works of art, each meant as a statement in its own right. She is the only truly abstract artist in the exhibition, using squares and rectangles to further her interests in light and color.

The works in 7 Artists: Contemporary Drawings were submitted by the artists as representative of their use of the drawing medium. The pieces chosen span several years of work for each artist, showing the growth of vision that has made their work an important part of the innovative exploration that is contemporary drawing.

The exhibition was created by Anne I. Lockhart, assistant curator in the Department of Prints and Drawings at The Cleveland Museum of Art, and will be on view in the prints and drawings galleries. A short catalog of the exhibition is on sale for \$.75 at the Museum sales desk.

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For additional information or photographs, please contact David Patterson, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106; 216/421-7340.